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College

Composition and Communication

THE OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE CONFERENCE ON
COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND COMMUNICATION

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Vol. I

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No. 2

Workshop Reports of the 1950 Conference on College Composition and Communication

Meeting March 24-25, Hotel Stevens, Chicago

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Workshop Reports of the 1950 Conference on College Composition and Communication

FOREWORD

The following reports represent the most extensive and concerted frontal attack ever made on the problems of teaching college freshman English. The rosters of the workshop groups reveal that some of our best minds, representing all types of higher education in all corners of the country, have met to suggest solutions to some of those problems. Registration in six of the fourteen workshops originally planned was so great that duplicate groups were set up, each making its own study and report independent of the other. This results in some repetition, of course, in this publication, but this is more than compensated for by new approaches to the same problems and by a more complete

analysis of them. The reader will note, moreover, that some ideas run like a refrain through reports from groups working ostensibly on quite different topics. It is in these that we may detect a philosophy of freshman English emerging. Some reports reveal disagreements too, and perhaps every reader's reaction will be a mixture of hoots and hosannas. At least we have a veritable banquet of food for thought. As teachers and administrators consider the recommendations made by the various workshop groups they will discover some which call for further discussion and clarification and some which demand immediate, constructive action.

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The Function of the Composition Course in General Education

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 1

The majority of the members of the workshop agreed that these objectives of general education should govern the organization of the composition course in a conventional educational program:

1. To cultivate the ability to think logically.
2. To cultivate respect for human worth despite accidents of class, color, culture, or other divisive circumstances.
3. To develop taste.
4. To develop the ability to discipline emotions and to arrive at reasonable judgments.
5. To develop intellectual competence.
6. To cultivate a belief in the necessity for ethical behavior.

The present practices in the teaching of composition, as represented by the workshop members from various college staffs, were approved by the majority as satisfactory means for attaining the objectives of general education.

The common method of assigning essays for analysis in private study and in class discussion was approved by the majority to bring the student to recognize (1) the means and the value of organizing material logically, (2) the necessity for basing all generalizations on fact, and (3) the importance of weighing conflicting evidence before delivering a judgment.

The assignment of readings was approved by the majority as the most successful way of informing the student sufficiently and stimulating him adequately to write upon such topics as will enable him to study and evaluate his own patterns of thought and con-

duct and to study current problems. In addition, the student's use of his own experience and the enlightenment made possible by class discussion were judged by the majority to constitute valuable aids to the formation of a well-developed mind and character.

The reading of literature in addition to formal and informal exposition was also approved by the majority as a valuable aid to the development of the student's taste.

The group also approved the practice of studying composition for the purpose of enabling the student to achieve a responsible and accurate mode of expression.

More specifically, the majority of the group approved these methods of enabling the student to achieve the general objectives:

(1) Studying logic informally in readings and using logical methods in composition.

(2) Reading works drawn from world literature to inform the student of differences among men; requiring the student to study his own ideas and behavior in comparison with that of others.

(3) Analyzing in class discussion and in critical compositions certain literary works; presenting problems in the evaluation of literary works.

(4) Reading materials that enable the student to achieve a better understanding of human nature; requiring of compositions on controversial topics the qualities of clarity and fairness.

(5) Developing and demonstrating, through appropriate readings and required compositions, intellectual competence.

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(6) Demonstrating the existence of a moral tradition through readings, and requiring of compositions the application of a defined standard of judgment.

The workshop recommends to the Conference on College Composition and Communication that it undertake to promote the realization of the joint responsibility of all departments in the colleges to maintain appropriate standards in judgment of compositions in all courses.

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The Function of the Communication Course in General Education

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 2

The group first sought to define the terms used in the title of Workshop No. 2. It decided that the general education program could be characterized by the following concerns: the impact of contemporary living; horizontal integration; ignoring lines between departments; satisfying individual needs; emphasizing relation of individual to society; primarily non-vocational education; education for all the children of all the people; education of the whole person.

The group decided that the communication course could be defined or characterized by the following eight points: (1) Inclusion of training in the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening; (2) emphasis on interrelation of course materials; (3) emphasis on student recognition of needs; (4) emphasis on communication activities in present surroundings; (5) consideration of mass media of communication; (6) emphasis on social and group projects; (7) emphasis on critical evaluation of the sources of material; (8) development of a scientific attitude toward language.

In considering the function of the communication course, the group felt that there should be a definite relation of the course to the general education program; that the role of the course should be set down in the general education program; that there should be a relation of other departments and teachers to the communication course.

Some of the specific suggestions made for developing writing skills were: (1) a critical appraisal of the treatment of the same topic by at least two magazines; (2) a review of a film; (3) a re-

search paper; (4) a report; (5) a composition based on an oral class discussion. The following suggestions were made for developing speech skills: (1) division of a class into groups with a discussion leader, thus attaining private speaking within small groups; (2) emphasis on oral work, group discussion, and idea as more important than form; (3) instruction in parliamentary procedure; instruction in social communication.

In discussing the purposes of reading, the group agreed that the stimulation for reading needs should be developed in the student. The course should (1) teach the student to evaluate sources of information; (2) consider mass media of communication; (3) develop skills in the consumption of mass material; (4) encourage group projects rather than teacher domination; (5) develop a scientific attitude toward reading.

The general conclusions arrived at by the group were (1) that we should develop all of the language skills needed by the individual for effective living, with the immediate aim to train him to perform effectively in his college and to prepare him to continue this development of his communication skills in life after graduation; (2) that it is the responsibility of other courses in general education to provide further experiences in all the language skills; (3) that the nature of the communication course is such that it involves continuing instruction rather than a limitation to one level or to a certain number of hours; (4) that all faculty members be urged to take advantage of communication facilities; and finally (5) that the communication course be viewed not as something

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new to replace our present courses in composition and speech nor as a combination of such courses but as an extension of the idea of integration characteristic of general education courses.

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Objectives and Organization of the Composition Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 3

I. OBJECTIVES

Assumptions: (1) The course in question is the usual two-semester or six-hour course (or its equivalent) required of all freshmen.

(2) The course will not *by itself* bear responsibility within its institution for producing graduates who can meet the normal non-professional requirements of writing without embarrassment to the institution granting them degrees. Nor will it *by itself* assume responsibility for developing in its students an acceptance of humanistic values.

(3) The following objective is offered, also, in the belief that the course has lost effectiveness in large part through the acceptance of multiple objectives.

Objective: The objective of the course as defined is to develop in the freshman the power of clearly communicating facts or ideas in writing to a specified reader or group of readers. All other aspects of the course (such as, skill in reading, the study of semantics, the enlargement of vocabulary, command of mechanics and grammar, introduction to literature) should be considered subsidiary, to be introduced *only to the degree* that they can be demonstrated to serve the end of clear and effective writing.

(1) The writing which will best achieve the objective is that whose purpose is to present facts or ideas or to persuade or convince. The style which should be used is that which achieves the desired result in the way most appropriate to the occasion. Within these limitations the student should be encouraged to develop his own style.

(2) Reading should be chosen with two purposes in mind: (a) the pro-

viding of effective illustrations of good writing of the kinds to be undertaken in the course; (b) the providing of subject matter for themes. It is recognized that many college freshmen need training in reading in order to pursue college work with success. Such training, however, should be the responsibility of the whole institution rather than the sole responsibility of the freshman course in composition.

(3) While insisting that training in the mechanics of composition is properly an objective of pre-college training, we are compelled to recognize the existence of deficiencies in these subjects on the part of students entering college. We therefore believe it to be part of the obligation of the freshman course in composition to take measures toward developing in all students such skill in the mechanics of composition as is judged necessary for them to achieve the stated objective of the course. As a corollary to this statement, we recommend that special remedial measures be taken for the benefit of those students found particularly deficient in the mechanics of composition.

II. ORGANIZATION

Preliminary: The group has considered those matters which affect the organization of the freshman course in composition. It recognizes that many of these are, and should be, determined by local circumstances. But it believes that some of these matters involve fundamental principles and that specific recommendations are called for. It therefore proposes the following:

(1) *Sectioning:* The separation of freshmen into sections by proficiency tests is recommended. Wherever prac-

ticable, the sections should be of three kinds: (a) remedial sections for students so ill prepared for college composition that they cannot hope to pass the work in ordinary sections; (b) advanced sections for students so well prepared that they will profit relatively little from work in ordinary sections; and (c) standard sections for all other students.

Remedial sections may be handled in one of two ways: (a) they may be pre-college, non-credit sections; or (b) they may be credit sections required to attend extra class sections each week. It must be recognized that work in non-credit sections suffers as a rule from low student morale. Therefore extra-session classes bearing credit equivalent to that granted to standard sections are recommended. *It is further recommended that the addition of such extra hours be compensated for by a reduction elsewhere in the student's program.*

The work done in advanced sections should challenge the abilities of the students so they will make the effort necessary to benefit in high degree from their work in composition.

It is strongly recommended that in the freshman course in composition there be no deliberate segregation of students by reason of professional interest.

(2) *Exemption:* Exemption from freshman composition should not be granted to any student on the basis of proficiency tests *except* when to deny such exemption would work real injustice. It is believed that it is only the rare freshman who will profit by being exempted.

(3) *Size of sections:* The size of freshman sections in composition should not exceed 20 to 22 students. It is believed that 22 students is the largest number that can be taught with satisfactory results.

(4) *Amount and kinds of writing:* Each student should be required to write a minimum of 4,500 words during the first semester and a minimum of 7,500 words during the second semester. Each student should be required to write a paper involving the use of the library and demonstrating that he knows how to utilize the resources of the library, how to acknowledge indebtedness by the use of quotation marks and footnotes, and how to prepare a bibliography in proper form. In addition, it is desirable that an occasional impromptu theme in class be required each semester. Approximately ninety percent of all writing should be expository in nature.

(5) *Conferences:* Each student should be given at least two individual conferences each semester about his writing. Such conferences should be not less than fifteen minutes in length.

(6) *Instructional load:* Assuming that an instructor should not be expected to devote more than thirty-five hours a week to duties directly connected with teaching, it should be recognized by all administrative officers that effective teaching of a freshman composition class of 20 to 22 students will require one-third of his teaching time. Further, in no case should an instructor in composition be expected to teach more than 60 students as a total teaching load. If he is required to teach more students per class or a larger total number of students, he cannot do a proper job unless he sacrifices all interest in research and much of the time which he needs for proper recreation and leisure.

(7) *Group reading of themes:* During each semester, group reading of themes by the freshman staff should be carried on as often as needed to bring about a general agreement as to grading standards.

(8) *Final examinations:* Final examinations at the end of each semester

should include the writing of a theme which will demonstrate (or not) that the objective of the course has been attained. It is desirable that the student have a choice of topics, that the topics meet the approval of all members of the staff, and that the same examination be given to all sections at the same time.

(9) *Questions for local decision:* The following questions are such that their answers are largely dependent on local circumstances or on the make-up of a particular staff. The committee therefore feels that recommendations are inadvisable. (a) Should there be a detailed syllabus for the course, or should there be merely a course outline? (One or the other is needed.) (b) Should there be complete or only partial uniformity of texts? (At least partial uniformity is made inevitable if the recommendations contained herein are followed.)

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THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 3A

The members of this workshop sought to determine: first, what the student should know and should be able to do at the end of and as a result of his work in the composition course; and, second, the means by which this knowledge and ability might best be developed.

I. *Objectives:* The student should have something to say, and should be able to communicate it clearly and effectively to any one of a variety of reader groups, for any one of a variety of purposes. His expression should be acceptably "correct" in terms of the conventions of the level of usage appropriate to his audience and his purpose. Fur-

ther, he should have at least elementary knowledge of the basic research techniques of using a library, taking notes, and organizing the material gathered.

II. *Organization:* A number of problems bear upon the way in which the above objectives may be achieved. These concern matters of organization in the broad sense; they may be classified under two headings:

A. *Personnel:* (1) *Should the students in the composition course be screened and separated into different sections on the basis of the knowledge and ability which they already possess before the course is undertaken?* Although

we recognized the problems involved—including problems of morale for both students and teachers, and questions of the responsibility of the school to students of high and students of low ability—it was the consensus of the group that some degree of segregation is desirable, to the extent of separating two groups from the majority of students in the standard course. The top five percent, perhaps, should be placed in a special section in which the work is more mature and advanced than the average; the lowest five percent should be placed in a group in which the work is more elementary, with greater emphasis on fundamentals.

For the very lowest group it may probably be necessary to offer work that is essentially sub-freshman in character. The consensus of the workshop was against giving full credit for such work; the course should be either a non-credit or a partial-credit course.

Here, clearly, some kind of diagnostic test must be used for screening. The details of administering the test will fall either upon the school administration—in connection with the giving of general placement tests for admission—or else upon the composition staff in giving its own test.

(2) *How heavy a teaching load should the individual instructor be expected to carry?* The general answer to this question is that the load should be sufficiently moderate to allow the instructor to achieve our objectives. More specifically, the group felt that in computing the teaching load in terms of hours, three hours of work in composition should be counted as the equivalent of four in other work; thus, nine hours of composition would constitute a full twelve-hour load. In terms of the number of students for whom the individual instructor is responsible, the maximum should be about seventy-five.

B. *Content of the course:* In general, the main emphasis in the course should be placed on original writing; the bulk of this writing should be in a broad sense expository. The group did not wish to make a specific recommendation as to the actual amount of writing to be done, except that it should be the maximum amount that the instructor can conscientiously read under the conditions of his college responsibilities.

Some student time should be devoted to analyzing examples of writing, including some of their own work as well as pieces by professional authors. Although recognizing the fact that it is undesirable and indeed impossible to examine any piece of writing without giving specific consideration to the facts and ideas which the author sought to communicate, the group felt that the chief purpose in this analysis of texts should be a study of the devices and techniques of composition which they illustrate.

The following more specific problems were considered:

(1) *Is there any room in the elementary composition course for the study of literature as literature—in the sense of *belles lettres*?* There is not very much room! If literature as literature is to be studied at all, it should be limited in amount; it should come late in the course; and it should be clearly designated for what it is—something apart, essentially, from the central material of the course. (The group did not wish to go on record as opposing its inclusion, at least in schools where there is no other required course in which literature is presented.)

(2) *What is the role of the research paper in the elementary composition course?* The research paper is a difficult project—difficult for the student, and difficult also for the teacher if he is to exercise the supervision necessary to

insure thoroughness and originality. Nevertheless, it is a project eminently worth while if well done; it enables the student to use at once virtually all the skills he has learned, in a work of some proportions; and—once again, if well done—it gives him a feeling of genuine accomplishment. Certainly it is essential if the objective of learning the basic research techniques is to be achieved. The instructor—or the staff, as a departmental policy—should require the preparation of either one extended research paper or a number of shorter papers involving research.

(3) *What should be done about vocabulary building?* The group was skeptical about the value of trying to teach vocabulary by *direct* methods—using vocabulary drill lists and the like. Positive results can be attained, however—words can be transferred from the student's recognition to his active vocabulary—by the conscientious and imaginative instructor who works carefully with the student in connection with the latter's own writing. The important thing is to make the student aware of his need for a better vocabulary; show him that there is a better word for his purpose than the one he has used, and the chances that he will remember the better new word are good.

(4) *What can be done to help the student spell correctly?* The members of the group had all had too much sad experience to think that they could find a final answer to this perennial question. A few positive suggestions were made, however: the use of individual spelling lists compiled from the student's own mistakes; the use of mnemonic devices; and the relating of spelling to the study of diction in general (e.g., difference in spelling of homonyms).

III. *General recommendations:* The group wished to go on record as favoring several policies or programs in con-

nexion with matters which transcend the particular problems of the organization of the composition course.

A. *Cooperation with other departments and with the school administration to make the maintenance of standards in expression a school-wide responsibility.* It should be recognized that effective expression is a basic skill. Students are not simply to study it in one course in their freshman year; they must continue to apply it in all their college work. If this objective is to be achieved, measures must be taken to develop and maintain among all students—not only those enrolled in English course—a consciousness of the importance of writing and speaking well. Specific measures suggested include the following:

(1) One or more kinds of follow-up should be employed as a check on the student's continuing attention to effective expression after he has completed the elementary composition course. (a) One possibility is the policy of having teachers in other courses report to the composition staff the names of students considered deficient in the use of English. The composition staff may then test the students so reported in order to determine more specifically the nature of their deficiency. (b) A more comprehensive plan is to give *all* students a test in English fundamentals and composition, probably near the end of their sophomore year. (c) For the students found deficient by either or both of these methods, an upperclass "clinic" may be set up. Presumably no credit would be given for work in the clinic.

(2) At one of the schools represented in the workshop, the administration undertakes to test the ability in English of staff applicants for employment in departments other than English. Such a plan provides assurance that the

faculty in general will be qualified to cooperate in the follow-up plan.

(3) Whatever the details of the program, the responsibility would probably lie with the director of the composition staff to keep the rest of the faculty conscious of it by sending out periodic notices.

B. *Canvass of conditions by the C. C. C. C. or N. C. T. E.*: The following recommendation is made in recognition of the fact that although most of our problems and many of our procedures are common, still standards in the teaching of English composition and in working conditions for the teacher do differ among various institutions, and differ too widely. For instance, one of the members of this workshop came from a school in which only one semester is allowed for the teaching of all this material.

Specifically, it is suggested that either the C. C. C. C. or the N. C. T. E. undertake a survey of standards similar to the one recently made for midwestern state colleges, but a survey as much broader in scope as the national organization will make possible. Departments at all institutions should be canvassed to determine two things: the first would be the *actual* situation with regard to the time devoted to teaching composition, and with regard to the average number of students per composition section, the number of sections ordinarily taught by one instructor, and (another way of getting at the same relationships) the average number of students for which one instructor is responsible. The second

thing would be the professional opinion about the *ideal* situation with regard to these figures—the kind of teaching load which will actually make possible the realization of our best objectives for composition teaching.

Such a survey might result in the preparation of one or more lists (on this point there was difference of opinion among members of the workshop): either a "white" list of institutions at which conditions are satisfactory, or a "black" list of institutions where they are not, or both.

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Objectives and Organization of the Communication Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 4

Workshop Number Four, assigned to consider the objectives and organization of the communication course, had time for only the first of these. The workshop agreed upon the general aim of the course; agreed upon certain common principles and concerns that bind together reading, writing, speaking, and listening; and agreed substantially on specific objectives in each of the four areas.

The purpose of the communication course is to develop students' abilities to give and receive meanings conveyed in *language*, to the further end that they become effective and alert members of a democratic society.

Course unity rests on at least three general principles which the four aspects have in common. *First*: the instrument, language, is both symbolic system and social process. The student should understand: (a) how meaning is conveyed by language, and why misunderstandings occur; (b) how connotation and context affect meanings; (c) that "correct" language is language appropriate to its time, place, circumstances, and purpose; and (d) that standard English is to be central in the course. *Second*: effective communication is disciplined. (a) The student should understand the principles of choosing and organizing his materials to support his purpose effectively for his audience. Conversely, he should learn to recognize the controlling purposes in what he reads and hears, in order to evaluate content and organization. (b) For argumentative discourse, especially, this end requires some knowledge of, and practice in, the principles of logical and psychological persuasion—elementary logic and fallacies, and the basic propaganda appeals.

Finally: the student must develop discrimination toward communications received through the mass media of radio and press. He should understand not only how and why these media affect the content of what they transmit to him, but also the role they play in forming public opinion.

To implement these aims the workshop set up more specific objectives in each of the four areas. The items starred (*) are, though desirable, perhaps less central than the others. For *speaking*, the student should develop some skill in conversation, group discussion, extemporaneous speaking of different varieties, the oral reading of informational materials (reports, minutes, directions, articles, etc.), the fundamentals of parliamentary procedure (*), reporting of personal experience (*), and speaking before a microphone (*). *Listening* the student should understand to be the key to good conversation and fruitful group discussion. He should learn how to take good notes on lectures. He should develop his critical powers by listening to talks of information and opinion (lectures, sermons, remarks by commentators, advertising commercials) in both radio-listening and "live" situations. And he should have at least one experience in an interview (*). The student should develop some proficiency in *writing*: (a) reports and investigative articles; (b) organized extemporaneous pieces (e.g., examination answers); and (c) letters—social, business (e.g., of application, of tactful refusal), letters to the editor and to congressmen. Several reports of personal experience (conventional themes) seem desirable, perhaps early in the course, to show the student that he

has experience to communicate, but predominantly subjective writing should not be stressed. *Reading* training should deal almost exclusively with informational and argumentative materials: sets of directions, bulletins, textbooks, articles, non-fiction books (perhaps excerpts), news reports and analyses, editorials, and advertising. Students should make some content analyses of mass media. *Reading* should equip the student with techniques to ascertain what is being said, and should teach him the principles and pattern of clear, effective explanation and of sound argument. Literary texts should be examined, but briefly — and primarily to show how their aims and techniques differ from those of exposition and argument.

There was some opposition in the workshop to certain items in this plan. Several members questioned the "practical" emphasis of the course and deplored, as ultimately dangerous, the loss of the humanistic aspects of the more traditional course. This view calls for more "self-expression," more attention to the precision needed to communicate personal experiences accurately in themes and essays. It calls also for much greater use of literary materials in reading. The consensus was, however, that to accomplish anything significant in the traditional direction would certainly entail jeopardizing the full program outlined above. Furthermore, literature is so important it deserves a required course in

its own right; to offer other departments grounds for arguing that "literature is already taught in the communication course" would be imprudent.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 4

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THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 4A

The term *communication* was agreed on as having reference to the employment of verbal symbols and body movements and tones of voice to produce a desired effect, and the receiving of the intended meaning from others' use of symbols and their non-verbal accompaniments. This means that listening in-

volves both sight and hearing; that reading requires perception of visual and other sensations and meaning through the verbal symbol; that speaking requires utilization of words, tones, and gestures; and that writing requires an ability to use verbal symbols to represent tones and gestures as well as the

other content of the intended communication.

The term *communication* was not conceived to refer only to formal classroom speeches and themes, but to all forms of speech and writing in the multifold social context of life. Listening was conceived as being composed of purposeful attention to get communication.

Effective assignments in the teaching of writing include the order letter and the letter of application, both with and without the data sheet; the social letter; the writing of directions; the writing of descriptions of simple processes, scenes, and objects; the research paper; and the analysis of communication forms.

Effective teaching of listening requires the recognition of two basic factors: one, that listening is primarily a matter of undivided attention and, two, that a word, phrase, or reference of high emotional content will deflect the student's attention and lead him away into his own chain of associations. Securing undivided attention is partly a matter of having subject content that is more interesting than other things and partly a matter of how it is presented. The student's understanding of the psychological effects of language upon him is necessary to enable him to control and guide his responses to language. Techniques agreed on were having students give directions to be followed in detail by the class or a member of it, making exact recordings of speeches heard in a discussion or argument, using the phonetic alphabet in recording short speeches, and having students listen to recordings of their own and others' speech for analysis.

Effective speech work involves some teaching of the nature of the speech organs, the relation of writing to speech, and the importance of gesture and tone in speech. Assignments are panel and group discussions in class of topics in

the course such as the research paper and methods, listening and speaking skills, and evaluation of student performances. Informal discussions of subject matter like those situations encountered in adult life were stressed. Muskingum College reported good motivation achieved in a declamation contest, but admitted the speech situation did not exist in post-college life.

Reading, it was agreed, should be varied and assignments drawn principally from the kinds of reading the student might reasonably be expected to do after college. Comic books were recognized as a part of the student's reading material and it was agreed that they might be used to show what words must be made to symbolize where there are no pictures. (Reference was made to Flesch's chapter "Can We Do Without Words?" in *The Art of Readable Writing*.)

It was agreed that basic to the teaching of all aspects of language is the teaching of the skill of observing forms of communication, analyzing them, and classifying them according to the social context. Learning effective communication then, is learning to adopt the communication means to the communication situation.

The objectives of a communication course were agreed on as follows: (1) To teach the student that language is a form of behavior and the principal manifestation of personality. (2) To teach the student that language is symbolic and that communication involves verbal symbols, gestures, and tones of voice. (3) To teach the student to observe, analyze, and classify forms and means of communication in relation to the social context in which they occur. (4) To train the student to distinguish between report of sense, or mathematical data, and emotional language in his own and others' communication. (5)

To develop in the student an ability to discriminate among the various areas of speech and writing. (6) To develop in the student the ability to adapt his communication means to the social context in order to produce the intended effect upon his reader or auditor. (7) To train the student to focus his attention on the speaker and not allow himself to be deflected from the speaker's meaning by his own emotions and associations. (8) To train the student to be sensitive to, and to use, emotive devices such as metaphors, rhythmic patterns, and imagery in communication.

It was agreed that the individual teacher and the staff can reorient and retrain themselves to think in terms of the semantic and contextual aspects of language, employ the inductive study of language, and adopt the objectives and techniques listed above as their own in the classroom.

It was agreed that the administration can and should make the communication course a five-hour course rather than a three-hour one, and provide such equipment as opaque projectors and recording devices with the necessary room equipment for their use.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 4A

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Grammar in the Freshman Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 5

I. We discussed the following exploratory questions: (a) What is grammar? (b) What value or validity has the traditional review of grammar as an introduction to the course? (c) Is the explicit teaching of grammar instrumental in teaching students to write acceptably? (d) Can usable criteria be established in reference to which we can talk about and evaluate the grammatical acceptability of statements? (e) If so, where do such criteria come from, and how can they be defined?

II. We agreed on the following general policies in teaching grammar:

(a) Students in the freshman course should be taught, if they do not already know, certain basic grammatical concepts, so that they may develop their sense of how language works and thereby how to use it more effectively. They should know enough grammatical terms to carry on analytical and critical discussion of the structure of particular statements.

(b) Students should be required to know only that modicum of grammar which is indispensably necessary for manipulating sentences. Students who have implicit, practical knowledge of how to construct acceptable sentences should not be required to make their knowledge explicit in conventional terms.

(c) Teachers should have a scientific (*i.e.*, descriptive) conception of grammar. They should tactfully build up a descriptive conception of grammar in the minds of students who have been accustomed to think of grammar as a set of prescriptions. (Tact is necessary, for a person depends on his prescriptions and will flounder if they are taken from him

before he has sight of something reliable to put in their place.)

(d) Teachers should use whatever grammatical terms they individually find convenient and usable. This usually means that teachers had better use whatever grammatical terms their individual students already understand and use.

(e) Teachers should refrain from unnecessary abstraction and generalization and from over-elaboration and logicalization in teaching grammar. They should not teach grammar as an end in itself—neither as a mental discipline nor as an esoteric body of interesting knowledge.

III. We agreed upon the following conciliatory modicum of specific grammar which might be included in our teaching techniques: (a) "Parts of speech" (with great elasticity of interpretation). (b) The subject-predicate relationship. (c) Distinction between phrases and clauses. (d) Modifiers (considered not formally but functionally as qualifiers of more nearly absolute or primary expressions). (e) Connectives. (f) Coordination, subordination and parallelism should be somehow approximated in grammatical—perhaps quasirhetorical—conventions. That is, the significant diversity, connection, and relative prominence of elements in a distinct complex of thought or impression should be formally approximated in the verbal representation of that complex of thought or impression. In constructing such formal, verbal approximations of thought, the devices listed are indispensable.

IV. The foregoing recommendations apply exclusively to the teaching of freshman composition and communica-

tion, not to programs affecting potential teachers and language majors.

Summary: We shall teach whatever grammar is necessary to the writing of good informal statements. This means that parts of speech, for example, will be dealt with only as devices to aid the student in understanding relationships within the sentence, and that the emphasis will always be on the relationships, not merely on the definition of and recognition of parts of speech as such. It means that grammar will be used wherever it will contribute to either effectiveness or decency, and never when not related to these aims.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 5

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THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 5A

A large majority of the group recommended (1) the use of standard grammatical nomenclature, and (2) some instruction in grammar in the freshman composition course. Such instruction should include spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, word order, modification, parts of speech, idiom, morphology, and levels of usage.

Our workshop group included teachers in the following situations:

(1) Those whose departments are in a state of flux; they have been presenting grammar with no apparent success and now consider dropping the study of grammar and perhaps substituting theme writing with conferences to explain errors.

(2) Those who discard the study of grammar as such, or even discard all mention of grammar or grammatical

terms. Among these were the linguistic majors who are now teaching composition, and the education department specialists who seek to prove by citing the results of many studies that no correlation exists between a knowledge of the rules of grammar and correct usage. Also mentioned were some specialists in semantics, linguistics, descriptive grammar, and communication, who do not include "prescriptive" grammar in their courses.

One young instructor, a student of linguistics, said teachers in his department have no time for any grammar in their composition course. In the group was a commerce instructor from the same school who said he has to teach grammar in his business English classes because business executives demand exactness in mechanics from their em-

ploys. He also said he was called upon to teach an English course to the employees of Armour Packing Company—many of them men over forty, five of them Ph.D.'s. He said they requested that he teach them grammar.

(3) Those who wish to teach grammar as its own excuse for being, or for the sake of some standardization which may crystallize among the masses we are attempting to educate. Some of these instructors believe that prescriptive grammar may gain an impetus by fusing with various or all of the modern tangents, such as linguistics, semantics, descriptive grammar, and the communications programs.

One member from the University of Chicago, where there has been no grammar teaching, said that other departments have been clamoring for some such teaching in the English department. A committee has been appointed to write a textbook combining the study of grammar and linguistics.

The group as a whole recommends that the C. C. C. C. draw up, in as spe-

cific terms as possible, the various points of view of the study of grammar and then attempt to determine whether a reconciliation is possible.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 5A

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Semantics in the Freshman English Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 6

(1) We believe that semantics is a fundamental and necessary part of all courses in composition and communication.

(2) Traditional vocabulary building methods used in freshman English courses are to be deplored; they appear unsound in that vocabulary should arise naturally out of communication need in context with experience.

(3) Semantic principles seem to imply that non-directive or self-directive methods seem to be indicated, since education is a process of two-way communication between teacher and student.

(4) In the relationship of semantics to reading ability, we believe that reading is not a passive process, but a participative and active process, and that the teacher should work toward that end.

(5) We deplore the forcing of official likes and dislikes upon students in literary appreciation; rather, we believe that literature must be appreciated by the enjoyment aroused in the student's own nervous system. Therefore, any piece of literature may be important and great for different people and for the same person at different stages of his life. But there is no such thing as literature being great for all people at all times.

(6) Grammar should be taught in the freshman course only in the context of the need felt by both teacher and student. Traditional instruction in formal prescriptive grammar is to be deplored. We also deplore prescriptive grammar masquerading as descriptive.

(7) The semantic principle of extensionality is important for composition exercises and for creative writing. It is the consensus of the group that in composition exercises we should progress

from lower levels of abstraction to higher levels of abstraction throughout the term.

(8) The theme exercise, we believe, should be assigned in the light of the principle that communication is of necessity about something by somebody and it is important that the student select not only the subject to write about but also the audience to write to.

(9) It is our belief that semantics brings about sharper social understandings through insight into mechanisms of public opinion, propaganda, etc.

(10) The teaching of semantics in English courses requires fundamental changes in the training of teachers, with emphasis on certain subjects outside the traditional English curriculum, e.g., (a) psychology of personality, (b) social psychology, (c) sociology, (d) cultural anthropology, (e) general linguistics, (f) philosophy of science, and (g) epistemology.

(11) Insofar as we are teachers of English using semantics, we believe very strongly in cross-fertilization of disciplines among departments and that there should be interdepartmental communication at all levels, in order to promote our highest aims both as teachers of English and as teachers of semantics.

(12) We maintain that the whole subject of communication is big enough to warrant the professional training of teachers to that end alone.

(13) We have enjoyed the workshop method of discussion and recommend the continuance of such a program at subsequent meetings, with the suggestion that the people who take part should communicate with the chairman beforehand concerning the problems they wish discussed.

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THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 6A

Workshop 6a met to discuss the value of semantic principles applied to English instruction in the first two years of college. The result of the discussion was agreement on a list of five results desired from the incorporation of general semantics in language and literature instruction. These are as follows:

(1) A student should be aware of "map-territory" (*i.e.* symbol-object) relationships.

(2) He should have developed an awareness that in language there is no flat division between abstract and concrete but that there are different levels of abstraction.

(2) He should have cultivated the delayed-reaction order of response; *i.e.*, he should have learned to wait until he has understood what has been said before reacting to it.

(4) He should have a view of the various ways in which language functions in our culture—understanding, for

instance, the nature of factual-report language, ritual language, etc.

(5) Instead of being indoctrinated with fixed principles of "standard" English, he should have a feeling for language appropriateness in various situations and contexts.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 6A

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Reading and Grading Themes

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 7

Method of procedure: The members of the workshop graded at different times three mimeographed student papers of different types, and in prolonged discussion of each theme compared markings, grades, techniques, and principles. The following conclusions emerged from the discussion. Statements are majority opinion unless otherwise indicated.

I. *General:* (1) The principles upon which a paper should be graded can be derived only by reference to the purposes and conditions governing a particular course in a particular institution. Grades are a reflection of the purposes of the individual course, and uniformity in grades can be achieved only when the courses which they reflect are made uniform.

(2) An instructor, drawing on previous experience, should grade a paper as objectively as he can. As one member put it, her present grades are based on past acquaintance with some 30,000 papers. Though it is desirable ideally to be completely objective, in practice it is difficult, since an instructor's evaluation of a paper is influenced by his knowledge of the student and his previous work, by knowledge of other papers in a set, and other factors of this kind.

(3) Technical proficiency in expression should be rewarded by a satisfactory or passing grade even though charm of style, worthwhile ideas, etc. are lacking. So long as a paper is technically proficient, and so long as it says *something*, no matter if the ideas are vicious or illogically derived, that paper should receive a passing grade. (Rather heated argument at this point from a minority who insisted that a paper should be failed

for bad logic and/or vicious or inadequate ideas, regardless of its technical competence in expression.)

(4) Grades should, sometimes at least, be used to indicate a student's progress rather than the absolute worth of a paper.

(5) In determining the final course grade, papers written near the end of the semester should be weighed more heavily than those written earlier.

(6) Impromptu papers should be graded much less severely than papers written out of class.

(7) Grades should be qualified by written comments from the instructor.

II. *Standardization of grades:* (1) Standards for various grades must be determined by calibre of students and by other conditions peculiar to each institution. Thus an *A* or an *E* will vary in its significance in different institutions.

(2) Uniformity or standardization of grades is desirable within each department. The most frequently suggested plan to achieve such uniformity was to grade mimeographed student papers and to discuss them in staff meetings to determine what conditions and meaning will be assigned to each grade. With one or two exceptions, members of the workshop preferred letter grades to numerical grades for themes.

(3) Students should be informed of the meaning of theme grades. One suggested plan for this: a combination of posting sample A-papers, B-papers, C-papers, etc. and oral explanation by instructor at the beginning of the term.

III. *General observations on revising papers:* (1) It was generally agreed that revision of papers is a valuable and necessary part of learning to write.

(2) The amount of attention an instructor can devote to the student's revisions depends upon many factors: the class-load of the student, the teaching load of the instructor, the amount of conference time allowed to each student, etc.

(3) Ideally the instructor would insist on a revision according to all markings on the paper, though this seems to obtain only seldom in practice.

(4) In examining revisions the instructor should place emphasis on major matters.

(5) It was generally agreed that revision can be most valuable to the student when combined with a conference.

IV. Specific techniques in grading and revising themes: (1) Use of a revision sheet which requires the student to number each of the instructor's markings, then on a separate sheet under corresponding numbers to make the necessary corrections.

(2) The instructor marks one paragraph in a paper and asks the student to mark the following paragraph for himself.

(3) Several members of the group recommended the use of an opaque projector to flash student papers on a screen, and so to allow classroom analysis and discussion of the original paper and its revision.

(4) The most common alternative to the use of the projector was the use of mimeographed student themes handed out to be corrected by the students themselves.

(5) In calling for revision in style of a paper, the instructor should avoid imposing his own phraseology on the student. The student should be allowed to speak for himself as long as he is within standard practice.

(6) Reading student papers (both good and bad) in class and commenting

on them is an effective device in showing students how to revise.

(7) A potentially time-saving device: on some papers, instead of indicating the exact nature of each error, the instructor might simply put an X in the margin at the end of a line containing an error, and leave it to the student to find out what the error is and to correct it.

(8) For papers showing considerable technical proficiency but lacking in content or originality, etc., a split grade might be used (e.g. A for form and D for content).

(9) The plan of multiple grading (i.e., separate grades for punctuation, mechanics, sentence-structure, organization, content, etc., the overall theme grade being arrived at by adding the component grades) was mentioned but met with little favor.

(10) The instructor should praise the merits of a paper in addition to calling attention to its deficiencies. In this connection an interesting proposal was made that in marking a paper both merit and demerit could be indicated by using agreed-upon symbols such as the plus and minus sign. In final evaluation of some papers a two-fold table might be used, one listing merits, the other listing defects.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP No. 7

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THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 7A

Workshop 7a considered two major problems in reading and grading themes: (1) standards for evaluation and (2) the time required to make these standards meaningful to the student. The group recognized the value of oral work, but for the sake of efficiency limited discussion to written work.

The discussion of standards for evaluation was centered around seven questions: (1) Are objective standards with staff unanimity desirable? (2) What objective standards are now in use? (3) Should content or form be emphasized in rating according to those standards? (4) Should standards rise progressively throughout the term? (5) Should the student's final grade represent progress or achievement? (6) What evaluation can be made in addition to objective ratings? (7) What means can be found for the entire school to aid in maintaining standards for written work?

The group agreed that objective standards for grading themes are desirable and that the customary A, B, C grading system made staff unanimity important.

The objective standards were those in use in four different freshman English programs. In each the standards include content, organization, sentence structure, diction, and mechanics. In some, purpose is included. In most cases there is a further breakdown of each of these items. Each item is assigned a sliding scale of numerical values, and the final rating is a total of the points given for each item.

Everyone agreed that content and form are so closely related that actually they cannot be separated. However, in rating a theme an attempt at separation is an aid to the student, but content should be emphasized rather than form. A survey of the emphasis on the objective standards previously discussed revealed that practices differ. In one program content counts sixty percent and form forty percent; in some programs each counts fifty percent; and in another both content and form must be passing level for the theme to be acceptable. It was agreed that the double grade, one grade for content and one for form, might be good at first to encourage the student who was much weaker in one than in the other, but that later the practice gave him a false sense of achievement.

The consensus of the group was that the same standards should be in operation throughout the term and that the final grade should represent the student's achievement, not his progress.

Furthermore, the need for stimulating and challenging evaluation in addition to the objective ratings was agreed upon. Fuller comments from both teachers and students can help meet this need. A teacher's written comments are helpful, but they have limitations; a conference with a student is more effective in making him aware of the evaluation and in motivating him to make use of it in his future work. One member of the group reported a successful conference plan. The instructor

reads from the student's theme a sentence which is not clear and the student tells what he meant to say. The student's answer is taken down verbatim. After the entire theme has been gone over in this way, the student's replies are edited by the student and the instructor and compared with the original theme. This plan, developed with the use of a recorder, has a number of possibilities.

In addition to the teacher's comments, the comments from fellow students have several advantages. A student who reads his theme to the class and hears their criticisms feels that he has a jury of his peers. Too, the entire class can become aware of the variety of approaches to the particular writing problem and the possibilities of different methods to use in developing it. Students who read each others themes and comment by writing a critical paper develop a more critical attitude toward their own writing as well as toward the writing of others. All evaluation by students helps to make them aware of the standards for writing.

The 7a group were in agreement concerning entire-school cooperation in maintaining standards for written work. Different means were reported from different schools. In one school a department training students for technical work sent to the English department three papers written by majors in that technical field. One paper represented writing which is not acceptable from a major in that field, another represented the lowest passing level, and a third represented the desired standard. The instructors in that field hold the majors strictly to the approved standards, which conform to those of the English department. In another school the research paper in freshman English is written in cooperation with a staff member from the department concerned with the subject of the theme. And in

other schools staff members from other departments refer students with poor written work to the English department.

The discussion of the first problem, standards for evaluation of themes, led to the second problem, which concerns the time required to make those standards meaningful to the student. What teaching load allows the maximum instruction for each student? The answer to that question depends upon the answer to three other questions: (1) How much time should be spent grading each theme? (2) How much time should be spent in conference with students? (3) If writing is to be a continuous rather than a sporadic experience, to how many students can a teacher give that amount of time?

A survey of the group suggested that ten minutes on a short theme represented fairly good practice, though that amount of time is not adequate and is not typical of much work in the field. A fifteen-minute conference every other week is a minimum requirement, but, like the time spent on themes, is neither adequate nor typical. If each student is to have a continuous experience in writing and master the necessary skills and language habits, a teacher should have no more than a total of sixty students for full-time composition teaching. Practice and experience has proved that this load is desirable for maximum instruction for each student.

The group in Workshop 7a, Reading and Grading of Themes, agreed upon the desirability of staff unanimity on objective standards, fairly equal emphasis on content and form, the same standards in operation throughout the term, and achievement, not progress, as the standard for the final grade. The group also agreed upon the need for some evaluation in addition to the objective ratings discussed and for entire-

school cooperation in maintaining standards for written work. They recommended a total of no more than sixty students for full-time composition teaching.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 7A

Chairman: Theodore Kallsen, West Virginia University, Morgantown

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Margaret Sateren, Augsburg College, Minneapolis, Minnesota

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Gracia T. Sheldon, Milwaukee-Downer College, Milwaukee

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Lizette Van Gelder, Howard College, Birmingham, Alabama

Samuel K. Workman, Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago

The Construction and Use of Objective Tests

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 8

The general problem which confronted Workshop No. 8 was the improvement of objective tests in reading and writing. The four uses of such tests were: (1) as a diagnostic or placement aid; (2) as a teaching device; (3) for progressive evaluation of student ability, and (4) as a comprehensive or final achievement measure.

It was felt that most reading tests currently in use are mainly effective in singling out only the poorest group of readers, probably because the material is often difficult. Furthermore, the emphasis on speed, especially during the diagnostic test, cuts down the effectiveness of the test as a measure of the overall ability of the student. Paul Diederich, of the Educational Testing Service, suggested that good results have been obtained by giving reading tests over a single and complete selection, rather than a series of isolated passages out of context. Multiple choice questions over this single selection (of selected difficulty) should be varied as much as possible to give the greatest possible range of comprehension, for maximum predictability. Such a test might include questions on the writer's attitude, the function of a particular paragraph, definitions of words in context, comparative items, the main idea of a paragraph or of the whole selection, and the like. Questions which integrate the reading-writing function, such as the "function-of-paragraph" question, are particularly useful as a teaching device.

Similarly, it was suggested that high correlations have been obtained from writing tests over a unified selection, in this case a student theme of about "C"

grade. The proposed test would have two parts, both multiple choice in nature: part one testing content and organization, part two giving alternate choices for punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and so on. Correlations of .60-.75 have been obtained from this type of test, according to the workshop chairman, Mr. Diederich. This correlation is higher than that usually obtained for two carefully graded essays by the same student, or the same essay graded by different teachers. On the other hand, isolated tests on grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary seem to correlate only about .30 with essays written by the same students on the same day. An objective writing test of the kind described above would not be intended to take the place of the student theme, but would serve as a useful supplement, especially as a diagnostic device. High composition staff turnovers make such a test doubly valuable as a placement check at entrance time.

Both reading and writing tests of this nature should be followed by item analysis and class discussion, in order to get at the real sources of faulty comprehension and communication. Unconscious assumptions and irrational deductions can be hauled out into the open and examined against the weight of evidence in the text.

The workshop would make the following recommendations:

- (1) Individual teachers might experiment with such tests of their own construction.
- (2) The course staff could pool information on the effectiveness of these tests and other useful techniques.

(3) The college administration could participate in a comparative (inter-college) evaluation of such techniques.

(4) The C.C.C.C. bulletin could serve as a central communication vehicle for information on new methods and tests.

(5) The N.C.T.E. could continue to establish liaison with such groups as the Educational Testing Service, as they have done in the past, and serve as a central clearing house for information. Paul Diederich has volunteered the help of the Testing Service in helping to evaluate new tests and will be glad to correspond with individuals or staffs in connection with testing matters.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 8

Chairman: Paul B. Diederich, Princeton University

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Paul Elwen, Northwestern University

The Organization and Use of the Writing Laboratory

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 9

(Because of illness of persons in charge, this report is not available for publication at this time. It will appear

in a subsequent issue of *College Composition and Communication*.)

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 9A

The writing laboratory may be described, in general terms, as a special room, where, under the supervision of a trained faculty member, a student (or a small group of students) may receive methodical, individual instruction in English writing problems according to his needs, be they in correct usage, punctuation, coherence and unity, or any other branch of English. The atmosphere is made more congenial for such activity by writing tables, helpful books, and dictionaries.

At least five types of writing laboratories can be distinguished:

(1) A remedial laboratory for students who have been unusually neglected in their basic writing skills. Occasionally this is used as a sub-freshman English arrangement for entering freshmen who make a poor showing on the English placement test.

(2) A writing laboratory which is available to students taking a regular course in freshman composition or communication. Here, attendance is optional.

(3) A writing laboratory which is available on a college-wide basis to all students from all levels. Here, also, attendance is optional.

(4) A writing laboratory which is a part of the regular freshman English course, with designated hours of attendance required to supplement regular class meetings, as in science courses with laboratory hours.

(5) A writing laboratory where a student may obtain help in order to pass a standardized English test required by the college in lieu of a formal course in composition.

Among the advantages derived from a writing laboratory may be the following:

(1) Individual attention is given the student with poor background or in need of "refresher" assistance.

(2) Individual attention is given the student with a persistent isolated problem such as poor spelling, faulty punctuation, inadequate sentence sense, etc. Clinical treatment can remove such language blocks.

(3) Immediate attention can be given to individual writing difficulties, a significant advantage according to the laws of learning.

(4) Help can be given the student in selecting and organizing writing material. Helping him think it through at the very beginning may produce a better piece of writing.

(5) Educational guidance may be a by-product of counsel on writing problems. The laboratory English teacher may thus ease the task of the guidance adviser.

(6) The availability of expert help in a laboratory may encourage the student to do his own work rather than have a fellow student do it for him almost entirely.

(7) Special assistance can be given students who have to make up work

missed because of their absence from the campus, participating in inter-collegiate contests, etc.

(8) Any teacher from any department might send to the laboratory for diagnosis and treatment any student who is doing poor writing. Hence the existence of the laboratory can have a bracing effect in maintaining good English standards throughout the college.

(9) In general, the availability of the laboratory helps to generate confidence and lifts the morale in a real and functional way. A student invariably receives better grades after he attends a writing clinic.

(10) The laboratory might provide opportunity for following up the findings of diagnostic tests, so that help can be given those who show low scores in English skills.

(11) The laboratory could be a place to encourage individual students who show some talent in creative writing.

Any college planning to establish a writing laboratory needs to consider some of the following questions:

(1) What shall be included in the physical set-up?

(2) Who shall be allowed to use the laboratory? (Freshmen, all students, townspeople?)

(3) Who shall refer students to the laboratory? (English department, other departments?)

(4) What techniques are most valuable?

(5) How shall the laboratory be staffed? How many students per teacher? What training and experience necessary for teacher?

(6) Shall credit be given for attendance if the laboratory is a part of the writing course?

(7) How can attendance be encouraged when it is optional?

(8) How can progress of students attending the laboratory be measured?

Our workshop closed with the unanimous agreement that the writing laboratory can be a direct, timely, and functional medium for aiding the student in his individual needs in writing, and, ultimately, for aiding in the improvement of students' use of English in general. Our members hoped that more material on the organization and use of the writing laboratory would be published in the future.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 9A

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F. R. Tubbs, Stetson University, Deland, Florida

The Organization and Use of a Reading Clinic

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 10

Three general problems were considered. Arriving at solutions to all sub-problems was impossible, but the members of the workshop felt that defining and isolating specific problems was a step forward.

I. *What should be the aims and scope of a reading program?* With increased enrollments in colleges and universities, an awareness of reading problems has increased. Social changes have brought to college large numbers of students with widely divergent backgrounds and native abilities. Present-day curriculums require a great deal of reading, much of it of a difficult type. While practically all students present reading problems, the clinic is usually concerned with the student whose speed and comprehension are so far below normal that he cannot measure up to college standards in fields requiring reading. Reading disabilities vary with the individual and many of them may be corrected.

Solutions reached:

(1) The individual teacher should develop an awareness of the differences in reading ability, should be able to recognize a student's disability, make it clear to him, and help him overcome it.

(2) A reading program should provide corrective work for those who need it and developmental work for all.

(3) Diagnosis should be accomplished by testing, observation of the individual in the reading situation or by case history.

(4) Diagnosis of reading efficiency should consist of three phases: (a) screening, (b) specific diagnosis of weak skills, and (c) continuous evaluation of the remedial or developmental program.

(5) All faculty members should help determine which students may need

corrective or developmental help by observing reading habits and study habits.

(6) Teachers should recognize the fact that a reading problem at the college level may very likely be a symptom of a need for emotional or vocational counseling and guidance.

II. *What corrective or developmental techniques are useful in reading clinic programs?* Just as there is no one type of reading clinic that is perfect for all schools, there is no one remedial or developmental technique that is useful in all cases. Corrective or remedial methods reported in the literature are as varied as the diagnosed reading problems of individuals. Likewise, any technique selected is controlled by the particular educational philosophy of the clinician. However, despite the variety of philosophies and techniques used, most programs reportedly are producing satisfactory results.

Solutions reached:

(1) An awareness of individual differences in all areas and a sincere effort to meet the student at his present level is a requisite to any remedial technique.

(2) A program that motivates the student with a strong desire for self-improvement is usually successful regardless of the technique used.

(3) The C. C. C. C. should promote training in reading skills by holding yearly workshops primarily concerned with reading clinic programs.

III. *What is the place of diagnosis in a reading training program?* The individual teacher must be aware of the problem of reading disability and be willing to do something about it. The teacher must accept the student where he is as a reader. There must be basic understanding of the student as an in-

dividual. Success of the reading program depends upon the awareness of the instructor of the individual differences of the class, and his ability to make the student see his own disabilities and attempt to correct them.

Adequately done, the process of diagnosing reading efficiency at the college level is both difficult and time-consuming. Diagnosis should be continuous, used at periodic intervals as an evaluation of the progress and merit of the reading program. Reading tests, as diagnostic tools, have definite limitations that must be compensated for by such supplementary techniques as observation, case histories, and personal interviews. Diagnosis is frequently handicapped by lack of information, time, and personnel.

Solutions reached:

(1) The administration should provide the means whereby individual teachers may help in diagnosing and referring students to the reading clinic for further diagnosis and retraining.

(2) The diagnosis of reading difficulties should attempt to isolate causes and not symptoms of those difficulties.

(3) Mechanical devices may be useful as extrinsic motivators but are not essential to a successful clinic program.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 10

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Beulah Walton, Wood Junior College, Mathiston, Mississippi

Louis Ward, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana

Freshman English for Engineers

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 11

The group agreed during its first session that it could exchange views and information but would have little to recommend to the Conference or the National Council. This report is, then, a digest of information and views, not of problems and solutions. The workshop's one recommendation is that its activity as an established group be suspended until the National Council's Committee on English in Pre-professional College Programs makes its report.

1. *Should engineering students be segregated from non-engineering students?* Engineering students may (but do not necessarily) differ from others in: (a) mental set, attitudes, feelings; (b) mentality; and (c) skills, e.g., verbal vs. numerical skills. Such differences may vary appreciably from school to school, and the freshman course might adjust to local differences.

Opinion on segregation seems sharply divided. Anti-segregationists think that if English should develop the technologist as a citizen in his community, he should live with his community (*i.e.*, students in other fields) in the classroom and learn to communicate with them from the beginning. They think that the proper starting point for a course is the community of skills, knowledge, and interests of a group of unspecialized human beings, that development of humane knowledge and skills is promoted by that community. Segregationists agree with anti-segregationists about purpose but think that the special bent indicated by enrollment in engineering school calls for modification of the educational process to produce the best results. The engineering student has probably found English more difficult and/or less congenial than technical sub-

jects and therefore begins with a different level of skill, kind of discipline, attitude than others, *e.g.*, the liberal arts student; and since the only foundation the instructor can build on is the skills and attitudes that the student has, the differences tend to justify segregation as a means of more clearly defining the starting point and method for the teaching of English.

Practice of segregation seems to depend upon convenience; and opinion, upon practice. Among the schools represented at the workshop, segregation exists only where geography makes it administratively desirable (*e.g.*, large state universities with separate schools of engineering), and representatives of these schools and of purely technical schools advocate segregation. Anti-segregationists represented schools where mixed classes are geographically and administratively convenient.

II. *What are the purpose and nature of the freshman course?* The first purpose listed below is the one on which there was most agreement:

(1) To give students an opportunity to master "fundamentals" of English (agreement, clear reference, meaningful punctuation, etc.).

(2) To foster constructive attitude toward communication: expression is a part of any course and a necessary function of the citizen. Contrary attitudes are often fostered by technical specialists, and the college administration often misdirects student attitude by emphasizing (*e.g.*, in credit hours, scholastic actions, etc.) specialized learning.

(3) Generally: to develop a well-rounded citizen in a democratic society; especially: to develop disciplined, flexible minds; more especially, for engi-

neers: to develop technological attitudes of benefit to society.

(4) To develop skill in the basic methods of engineering; English composition is more useful for this purpose than any other basic course.

(5) To relate the discipline of imaginative literature to that of engineering.

Emphases vary partly according to calibre of student body; State universities, which accept all applicants from accredited high schools, emphasize the first point above relatively more than do private schools, where greater selection is possible.

The nature of the course varies also, and somewhat consistently with the purpose. Courses in state schools tend to teach objective factual communication; their students have difficulty in dealing with emotions and attitudes. Courses in private schools tend to use materials involving attitudes and emotions; their students have more difficulty with factual material than with human relations. Some courses use imaginative literature as a basis for written work, others do not; choice seems to depend partly on the content of later courses, partly on whether the course is segregated, partly on the interests of the staff.

III. What are the purpose and substance of the course in literature for engineers? The purpose of instruction in literature is to develop the habit of reading worthwhile books and the skill to understand and evaluate them. Most schools require one or two semesters of work in literature or one of the related humane disciplines after the freshman year, usually in the junior year. In a few schools, students fulfill a requirement by electing any one of several courses; in others, "Introduction to Literature" is

required. Some offer electives in English beyond the requirement. Only one school represented does not offer work in English beyond the freshman year. One (Rensselaer) requires literature in the freshman year, and teaches composition (technical writing) in "cooperative" courses and an advanced composition course.

Most introductory courses use contemporary or modern literature. Rensselaer freshmen and California Tech. juniors read classics.

IV. What kind of teacher should teach English to engineers? The members of the workshop concluded that, though methods differ, purposes are remarkably alike; and that methodology is much less important than the quality of the individual teacher. Instructors, especially for freshmen, should command the respect of students as persons, teachers, and citizens, and should have "breadth," i.e., should actively relate English to other disciplines. The specific requirements vary from one institution to another.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 11

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Articulating High School and College Work

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 12

I. *Statement of the problem:* Universities and colleges say high schools do not prepare graduates for university work in English, meaning that students do not evidence mastery of communication skills. High schools, on the other hand, attempting to prepare students for university work and misunderstanding the nature of the complaint, assume a formalistic approach to language arts which seems to include grammar as an end in itself, achieved through workbook drill. Enough evidence exists that, generally, universities are inconsistent in practice and preaching in that they seem to place a premium upon the mechanical nature of language through their selective devices and through the first semester freshman courses in English. There is need, then, for a coordinating agency to bring understanding and cooperative action between pre-college training in English and college training in English.

II. *Definitions:* (1) Articulation is an attempt to establish continuity for the individual student between his pre-college work (from grades through high school) and college work in communication skills.

(2) Any classroom of students represents a wide range of individual differences. It is the individual who is thought of as the product of our training on any level of education.

(3) Communication skills may be defined as written expression, oral expression, reading, listening, and observation, separately or in various combinations, with the ultimate purpose of maturing the student.

(4) This report recognizes no definitive difference between courses which

prepare for life and those which prepare for college.

III. *Trends:* (1) Many colleges require of their freshmen a formal study of grammar and rhetoric. This practice is to be condemned as a failure to understand the psychological laws of learning. There is negligible transfer of training from this kind of drill to adequacy or mastery in the communication skills.

(2) Many colleges emphasize expository writing wherein mechanics of expression are functional, syntactical, analytical, and in line with current linguistic findings. This practice is to be approved and should begin with the first grade, continuing through each year of the individual's training.

(3) Many colleges are developing programs for the integration of oral expression, reading powers, listening abilities, observation skills, and written expression. This practice is to be approved in the larger sense of the meaning of communication. Students at all levels should be given the opportunity to speak, write, read, listen, and observe in advancing complexity as determined by the limits of their individual powers.

IV. *What can be done about articulation on the staff level?* (1) Colleges should be prepared to accept the student as he has been prepared (implying confidence in the work of the pre-college level), planning in accordance an elastic program to fit individual differences. Certain reservations for such programs are to be noted: (a) Sub-freshman courses are not wisely constituted to solve the problems of the retarded student. He should be incorporated into the standard courses and assisted toward the solution of his difficulties through

conferences or voluntary laboratory sessions. (b) The superior student should not be exempt from work in composition or communication. If communication skills are a continuous progression toward greater complexity, then there is no absolute state of completion, and we only do the exempt student a disservice by stopping his progress at a high school level. This statement does not imply standard courses for such a student.

(2) Research in the area of teaching communication skills should be encouraged and the results should be made known. Little is understood about how the individual learns these skills, with the result that too much teaching, both pre-college and college, is based on educational fallacies, without sound basis in scientific, objective studies. In this light, two recommendations can be made: (a) Departments of English should encourage graduate work in this field and be prepared to grant doctoral credit for objective research in communication skills. (b) Individual staff research projects should be instituted and rewarded. The dualistic approach to literature and composition staffs needs careful realignment.

(3) Techniques need to be developed for evaluation of the continuous program from first grade to college graduation. (a) Careful analysis of objective testing is necessary to determine whether such testing truly reveals power or merely recognition. (b) Development of composition scales for all levels may be an approach to our need for objective analysis of individual work. (c) The role of grading as a motivating factor needs careful study. The problem of various grading systems also deserves attention.

V. *What can be done at the university and college level?* (1) The university, college, and junior college should be considered as potent instruments in

the realization of state courses of study in the field of English. Accordingly, interested and trained individuals from departments of English should be placed on committees to consider reorganization of state courses of study. Two states have been especially pointed out as proceeding in this direction with commendations for their results: the *Iowa State Course of Study for High Schools* and the *Wisconsin Course of Study for Junior High Schools*.

(2) Colleges should be instrumental in establishing co-ordinating groups of pre-college and college teachers. Membership in these groups should be apportioned equally and a cooperative tone should be established.

(3) Since college instructors know little about what goes on in the high schools, college administrators should send proper representatives, as a part of their teaching assignment, out into the high schools of the area for the purpose of establishing liaison between the various institutions.

(4) Colleges and universities, now almost completely the decisive factor in determining qualifications for teachers of English, should give extended study to this problem in an attempt to prevent poorly trained personnel from being certified as teachers.

(5) College staffs should be allowed to prescribe methods courses, to include educational and psychological breadth, for their own instructors in composition and communication. It is firmly believed that only responsive, trained personnel should be given the privilege of teaching freshman composition.

(6) Public and private school administrators should be given an opportunity to learn about the problems of articulation by (a) allowing representatives from college departments of English to present the programs of their departments before secondary and elemen-

tary conventions and conferences; (b) being encouraged to attend conferences and conventions similar to the ones held by the C. C. C. C.

VI. *What can the C. C. C. C. do?*
(1) Invite and encourage high school representation in the Conference.

(2) Establish a permanent group to study the problem of articulation with the purpose of obtaining extensive research data for all the elements represented within the framework of this report, such data to receive eventual compilation and exposition. The present workshop members have gone on record in favor of this recommendation by constituting themselves as a pilot group to work throughout the coming year.

(3) Operate as an agency to compile evidence of coordinative effort between pre-college and college groups in various localities.

(4) Disseminate results of all such research through its own bulletin and through *College English* and the *English Journal*.

VII. *What can the National Council of Teachers of English do?* (1) Encourage the fullest possible use of state councils of teachers of English for achieving better articulation between pre-college and college levels.

(2) Establish, wherever and whenever possible, conferences among elementary, junior high school, senior high school, and college groups. These conferences might be city-wide, sectional, or state-wide, but all levels should be represented. If college instructors of freshman English knew what language patterns were being taught and how they were being taught in the third

grade, for example, we would be making a great stride toward articulation of all our efforts.

(3) Establish standards of training and experience for teachers of methods courses in the field of English communication. These should include recent teaching experience in pre-college levels and a close, immediate connection with these levels.

(4) Open the way for cooperative interaction between departments of education, departments of psychology, and departments of English for the common pooling of knowledge to the end that we may have better teachers.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 12

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Administration of the Composition Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 13

I. *Statement of the problem:* The problem of administration of the composition course was broken down into several component problems: preparatory and in-service staff training, uniformity of grading, proper working relations with other departments, and the nature of administration itself.

II. *Training the staff:* The problem of staff training is perhaps the most crucial concern. Few teachers have had specific training for the job of teaching writing. Graduate schools are doing little at present to train teachers of composition. Furthermore, the graduate schools seldom either have or can procure men professionally competent to give such training.

Concerning undergraduate and graduate training of composition teachers, the workshop was in essential agreement on the following points. First of all, the training of composition teachers cannot be accomplished by delegation. English departments should accept the responsibility of providing such training. At the undergraduate level, extensive work in composition should be required of all majors. Instruction at the graduate level should be offered in rhetoric, in criticism, and in the laws and methods of language. It was felt that linguistic philosophy pertinent to such training exists and might be extended to other aspects of language and expression than to those to which it has already been applied. There are fields for profitable research into problems of composition, and journals exist for the publication of the results of such research. One duty of administration is to encourage research of this sort.

As a step in this direction members of the workshop have undertaken to col-

lect items for a selective bibliography intended to suggest areas both of professional training and of research. The categories for the bibliography were tentatively defined as follows: 1. Bibliography. 2. Linguistics including (a) Phonology, (b) Grammar, (c) Semantics, and (d) History. 3. Rhetoric. 4. Criticism. 5. Pedagogy. Other fields suggested were: Communications, Reading, and Psychology.

On the question of in-service training, the importance of weekly staff meetings was urged. A regular program of graduate assistantships is desirable when the circumstances of the institution permit it. The staff should work together. Raising the standards of a profession is to some extent a collective enterprise. It can be done by establishing the legitimacy of our subject matter, and we can demonstrate the importance of our subject matter only by studying it. If composition teachers are to gain the prestige which they seek they must earn and deserve it.

III. *Uniformity of grading:* The best results in the matter of uniformity of grading can be achieved through weekly staff meetings. In a very large department it is almost impossible to get a high degree of uniformity; however, staff grading sessions, especially at the beginning of the year, accomplish a good deal. Glaring defects and wide divergences may be corrected. The system of assigning each graduate fellow to a senior department member who himself teaches a section of the course was objected to on the ground that the senior member had to spend too much time training the fellow to grade. It was suggested that as a device to control

excessively critical graders the chairman might place upon a single "A" paper all the comments made by all the graders in the group; the result is to reduce an obviously satisfactory paper to an apparent failure.

Various techniques of screening entering students were discussed. It was agreed that no system is infallible, but that a period of time, usually from two to six weeks, is necessary for justice in placement.

IV. Relations with other departments: Here the basic question is whether composition is the responsibility of the English teacher alone. Criticism from other departments is far more common than cooperation. Indeed, exactly what sort of cooperation is possible seems uncertain. Frequently very little writing is assigned in other courses. Objective tests replace essay examinations. Too often even English instructors in advanced courses do not require students to write. Students who have finished freshman composition feel that they do not need to write any more. A further obstacle is that there is no agreement among departments on standards for good writing.

One method of solving the problem is to give the student only tentative credit upon the completion of freshman composition. Final credit depends upon the student's writing respectably in other courses. Members of other departments hand bad papers to the English department and the student is required to do refresher work, sometimes in a writing laboratory. Another device is to withhold the degree from a student deficient in writing. Here again the deficient student is sent to clinics and remedial sessions. In dealing with these problems, a faculty committee on writing, with representatives from various departments, may prove useful.

Whatever method is employed, new problems arise. Without agreement on standards of good writing there is no exact definition of writing deficiency. Students are often recommended to clinics on too little evidence. Recommendations from other departments are not always reliable, since not all faculty members are literate. Under the prevailing circumstances there seems to be no alternative but to claim for the English staff or for the faculty committee complete authority to decide what is satisfactory and what is unsatisfactory writing. It may be assumed however, that a practicable understanding of writing standards is not beyond hope, though it is likely that the matter will never be satisfactorily resolved by a neat formulation of rules. Accuracy of statement rather than beauty of style would dictate the nature of such standards. Certainly the English teacher should not allow his concerns to be limited to a merely stenographic accuracy; clarity, proportion, and honesty of thought are not outside his legitimate range. His special competences are pertinent in the consideration even of papers based on materials with which he is not familiar, but his dependence upon his colleagues in other areas must increase as he goes farther afield. The ultimate resolution of this problem depends, like most of the problems in the teaching of composition, upon the development of teachers who possess and can demonstrate a clear and professional superiority in the arts of language.

V. Kind and amount of administration: The chairman of a mature, energetic, intelligent staff should make himself as inconspicuous as he can; the chairman of a slack, incompetent, bored staff should make himself as conspicuous as he can. Whether he be inconspicuous or conspicuous, his responsibilities are the same:

(1) He should see to it that the staff is composed of the best people available for the job.

(2) He should try to find means by which these people can grow in their profession and by which more and better teachers may be trained to replace them and himself.

(3) He should maintain productive associations between his staff and other faculties of his institution.

(4) He should fight for a fair share of professional recognition for the members of his staff, for their salaries, housing, teaching loads, research leaves, vacations, and promotions. For the chairman of a composition course, this is an uphill fight.

(5) He should learn the programs of other institutions both by direct enquiry and by attentive participation in the N. C. T. E. and the C. C. C. C.

(6) He should himself do research of some kind appropriate to the field, and he must develop a capacity for understanding and evaluating the research of others.

(7) He should himself be a good teacher and he must teach composition.

To the group of chairmen who composed Workshop 13, no such paragon as might be expected to discharge all these responsibilities is known. Though he is not to be had for the asking, the workshop unanimously *invites* him to exist.

VI. Recommendations: One particular service which the C. C. C. C. might provide is a compilation of data on teaching loads of composition teachers. We request, therefore, that the editor of *College Composition and Communication* prepare and publish a questionnaire designed to learn what is exacted of teachers of composition throughout the country. Pertinent data would include the following items: (1) the total number of hours of instruction in the class-

room, (2) the total number of hours of instruction in composition, (3) the total number of conference hours, (4) the average salary of composition teachers, (5) the range of ranks of persons teaching composition, (6) the number of students for whom each instructor is responsible, and (7) the average tenure of composition teachers. Although a number of questionnaires of this kind have been distributed during the past several years, none has been limited to composition teachers so far as the members of the workshop know.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 13

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Administration of the Communication Course

THE REPORT OF WORKSHOP NO. 14

The first step taken by the workshop group was to indicate what particular problems were of major concern in each institution represented. The remaining sessions were spent in examining and discussing certain of these problems in detail. An attempt was made to understand each problem as it related to the administration of a communication program. At times the group expressed a sufficiently strong unanimity of feeling towards a problem to lead to a rather specific recommendation. The following statements or recommendations summarize the major conclusions reached by the group:

(1) The administrator of a communication course would find it helpful to establish an all-campus advisory committee whose function it would be to get faculty cooperation and to crystallize the local needs of the student by making a survey of the demands made upon him by the teachers of other college courses, and, further, to ascertain his needs for communication skills in becoming an effective citizen after college.

(2) The administrator of a communication course should set up a testing program designed to discover student needs, a program in which tests are considered as means, not as ends.

(3) Curriculum planners should realize that at least eight semester hours are needed for an adequate communication course.

(4) There should be no non-credit courses as such in a communication program.

(5) Sectioning should be done on the basis of student needs in the several skills, with sections which emphasize reading-speaking, or reading-writing, or other combinations, never on a high,

average, or low basis. Administrators should encourage the establishment of definite levels of proficiency for performance in the various communication areas, and make those levels familiar to both staff and students. In this connection it seems important to think and speak in terms of minimum levels instead of maximum levels so as to encourage students to continue their efforts to improve. The American Council on Education is studying this problem now and hopes to get some methods established for evaluating communication skills.

(6) Administrators should in every way possible encourage experimentation and research in the field of communication.

(7) Administrators should recognize the following qualities as essential for a good teacher of communication skills: (a) a high degree of flexibility; (b) several years of experience, preferably in both high school and college; (c) a good academic background in composition, speech, and psychology; (d) intellectual curiosity; (e) sympathy for students; (f) a demonstrated ability to think straight; (g) a high degree of learning ability; (h) an experimental attitude; (i) skill in the language arts; (j) ability to get along with others; (k) a democratic attitude. It is also suggested that communication skills teachers rich in the above qualities should have some permanence on the staff and should be eligible for promotion in rank and salary.

(8) The C. C. C. C. should recommend to the N. C. T. E. that pressure be brought to bear on the graduate schools to train persons to teach the communication skills. The C. C. C. C.

or the N. C. T. E. should form a committee to find out what offerings are now available at various graduate schools for training in the teaching of communication, and the report of the committee should be made available.

(9) The C.C.C.C. or the N.C.T.E. should establish a teacher placement service, a clearing house to which deans and department heads as well as teachers might turn for help.

(10) Administrators should establish some sort of in-service training for instructors of communication skills courses. (a) Beginning instructors might be paired with older, more experienced teachers, and they might work through the course together at least once before the new teacher is put on his own. (b) There should be cooperative grading of themes and speeches. (c) There should be a central communications office where the entire staff could meet, discuss problems, and establish a feeling of unity.

(11) Administrators of communication programs should attempt cooperatively to solve the rather complicated problem of transfer of credit from one school to another.

(12) Administrators should recognize the fact that communication programs are best organized and developed cooperatively with each teacher having a voice in arriving at common goals, objectives, and choice of subject matter. No one should be included on a communication staff unless he expresses a desire to teach communication skills.

The following suggestions were made for instructors teaching communication skills courses:

(1) Make as much use as possible of student leaders and chairmen in actual running of the class.

(2) Use student leaders selected from each section to meet with the staff and assist in planning course projects.

(3) Have a planning committee select materials from current publications to serve as a basis for class discussions and for further investigation leading to student writing and speaking.

(4) Get students started talking first, leading into writing from the class discussions.

(5) Have each section select its best speakers by student ballot and allow them to speak occasionally before an assembly of the entire communication group. Have best pieces of writing selected by a student committee and published or mimeographed and circulated among the students.

(6) Have student panels with a student leader to discuss assigned text material—a good way to work in practice in speaking without seeming to have a burdensome load of extra speech assignments.

(7) Use drill sessions as opportunities to stimulate student discussion.

(8) Draw all materials from sources closely related to student interests and needs.

PARTICIPANTS IN WORKSHOP NO. 14

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